

NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FM
BACKGROUNDER 1-0334
CHARLES WEISS/JERUSALEM

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ISRAEL: GALILEE CONTROVERSY

ANNCR:

THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED ON AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPMENT OF GALILEE. IN THE FIRST STAGES THOUGH, IT WILL HAVE TO EXPROPRIATE LARGE TRACKS OF LAND, MUCH OF IT ARAB OWNED. CHARLES WEISS HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT FROM JERUSALEM.

VOICE:

ISRAEL'S HALF A MILLION ARABS HAVE BEEN LARGELY UNHEARD FROM IN THE MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE. THE ARAB STATES AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION HAVE BEEN FAR MORE VOCAL. BUT A PLAN TO EXPROPRIATE EIGHTEEN HUNDRED ACRES OF ARAB LAND IN GALILEE HAS HAD THE EFFECT OF UNITING THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A COLLECTIVE ACTION.

MOST OF THE ELECTED HEADS OF ARAB LOCAL COUNCILS MET IN NAZARETH SATURDAY TO PLAN A COURSE OF ACTION AGAINST THE EXPROPRIATION PLAN. THE MEETING ELECTED A NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE THE PROTEST AND, MORE IMPORTANT, CALLED A GENERAL STRIKE OF THE ENTIRE ISRAELI ARAB POPULATION FOR MARCH THIRTIETH.

THE ISRAELI RE-ACTION HAS BEEN TO DISMISS THE STRIKE AS THE FRUIT OF PLO AND COMMUNIST INCITEMENT. AND THE OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF THE ARAB AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT IN PREMIER RABIN'S LABOR PARTY HAS CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE SUITABLE ACTION AGAINST, WHAT HE CALLED, A COMMUNIST-INSPIRED PROVOCATION.

ONE OF THE LEADERS FOR THE "ARAB COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF LAND," AS IT'S CALLED, IS AN ANGRY PASTOR WHO'S CONGREGATION IS IN GALILEE, THE REVEREND SHEHADEH SHEHADEH. AS A PRIEST HE SAYS HE FAVORS DEVELOPMENT, BUT BELIEVES IT SHOULD BE FOR EVERYONE. HE SEES THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM AS AIMED AT JUDAIZATION OF GALILEE, OFFERING ONLY FRINGE BENEFITS FOR THE ARABS, WHO, HE POINTS OUT, ARE CITIZENS OF ISRAEL WITH EQUAL RIGHTS.

THE REVEREND SHEHADEH CITES OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS TO SUPPORT HIS CASE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF GALILEE, IN ISRAELI TERMS, MEANS MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR MORE JEWS TO LIVE THERE. HE NOTES THAT NO ARABS SERVED ON THE COMMITTEE THAT DREW UP THE PROGRAM OR DECIDED WHAT LAND SHOULD BE EXPROPRIATED. "WE MIGHT NOT BE AS QUALIFIED AS THE JEWISH ISRAELIS IN THE DEVELOPMENT FIELD, BUT WE ARE ENTITLED TO A SAY," HE SAYS.

AN OFFICIAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, DOCTOR ZVI GANOT CONCEDES THAT ARABS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN PLANNING GALILEE DEVELOPMENT BUT DENIES THERE IS ANY DISCRIMINATION INVOLVED. SOME OF THE LAND TO BE EXPROPRIATED IS JEWISH LAND, HE SAYS, WHILE SOME OF THE ARAB LAND WILL BE USED FOR HOUSING ARABS EVACUATED FROM CONDEMNED BUILDINGS IN THE CITY OF ACRE. WHEREVER POSSIBLE, HE STRESSES, ALTERNATIVE PLOTS WILL BE OFFERED FOR LAND EXPROPRIATED INSTEAD OF MONETARY COMPENSATION.

JS/CAK